

The rest of the day, I paid maybe half attention to the lessons at best. Zora had cast a long shadow over my favorite swimming hole. There's a lot of places in and around Eatonville where you can have a swim, but Blue Sink—barely bigger around than a big house but deep enough that it never dried up—was ours. At the deepest end, an old weeping willow dipped in the water like a braided head, and we would swing out on its strong vines before letting go at just the right instant. Those moments of flying in the air before the water swallowed us in one cool gulp were pure joy, and I hated to think they were over.

But I also couldn't stop thinking about what Zora had said. Just because something's good listening doesn't necessarily make it true, and Zora didn't have any trouble telling a fib or stretching a story for fun. I could tell that Zora herself believed the story, but the question was, did I?

By the time three o'clock finally came, it was so hot that I convinced myself it was all foolishness. The three of us had been swimming at the Blue Sink since forever, and with the heat probably pressing up to one hundred degrees, I was willing to take my chances. I just had to have a dip.

CHAPTER THREE

Zora was walking beside me, eyeing me. "You sure?" she kept asking. "You sure you want to go to Blue Sink after what I seen last night?"

Each time she asked, I grew more determined.

"I'm fixing to turn into molasses if I don't."

"Well," she said, "I guess if it's two of us, maybe he won't try anything. . . ."

I had a pang of wishing Teddy was with us, but I didn't say anything. Teddy always had to run home after school and do his chores on the farm before he could come out and join us.